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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide an overview of the dramatic changes affecting community college education, this booklet presents a history of the movement which established community colleges, examines issues of particular importance in the 1990's, and offers predictions concerning community colleges in the 21st century. Following an introduction and brief history, the booklet profiles today's community colleges, reviewing the mission of two-year institutions and describing the characteristics which distinguish them from four-year schools. Then, student enrollments for the 1990's are discussed in terms of the factors contributing to projected enrollment increases. This section provides vignettes profiling 13 hypothetical students and the circumstances surrounding their enrollment, and highlights the demographic characteristics of the community college students of 1990. The next three sections look at curriculum and instruction; staffing; and finance, respectively, each concluding with a series of relevant questions currently facing community colleges. The final section provides a series of predictions concerning the status of community colleges in the year 2000, foretelling that the student body will include more minorities and persons over the age of 55; that the majority of faculty will have been hired in the 1990's subsequent to massive retirements; and that the academic agendas of fewer community colleges will be dictated by four-year institutions. (PAA)

FASTBACK

318



# Community Colleges in the 1990s

Glen Gabert



PHI DELTA KAPPA
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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# Community Colleges in the 1990s

by
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# Introduction

In the past 25 years, community colleges have changed dramatically. Not only are there many more of them, but their curricula have become much more comprehensive.

Community colleges in the past often suffered from a bad image. Sometimes referred to as "high schools with ashtrays," they were often viewed as a combination vocational school and transfer junior college for mediocre students. Today things are different. In areas that have community colleges, it is not unusual for more than 5% of the local population to be enrolled. In any community that has had a community college for 10 or more years, the majority of residents has either been on the campus for some course or activity or else has a relative or a friend who has.

This fastback provides an overview of community college education. A brief history of the movement to establish community colleges is followed by a description of some of the characteristics that set them apart from other institutions of higher education. Then some of the issues that are likely to be controversial in the 1990s are identified, followed by some predictions for the future.

The American community college movement is the most exciting development in higher education in the 20th century, and all signs point to its continuing vitality in the 21st



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# A Brief History

Like jazz and football, the community college movement is an American phenomenon. Nonexistent in 1900, public two-year colleges now account for more than half the nation's undergraduate enrollments. By the late 1980s about 430,000 associate degrees were awarded annually, and 70% of all postsecondary enrollments in vocational areas were at two-year colleges. The evolution of the comprehensive community college in the 20th century is an example of adaptation to meet real social needs: it was the next logical extension of educational opportunity after the common school, land grant college, and high school.

Although the community college is a 20th century development, some of its roots date back to the 1800s. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, influential educators advocated the establishment of two-year colleges. Very often these proponents were university presidents, and their intent was to free the university of the basic general education curriculum so that the "lofty" missions of research and professional training could be pursued without distraction.

William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, considered the first years of college more appropriately an extension of the high school because of similarities in curriculum and teaching methods. Harper felt that by making junior colleges a capstone to the high school, it would increase educational opportunity for many. At

the same time, he felt this would improve the quality of university education by not having to divert limited resources for functions better performed elsewhere.

Richard Jesse, president of the University of Missouri, felt that the maturity level of 17- and 18-year-old students was such that they would probably be better served by junior colleges that were extensions of local high schools than by universities. Edmund James, president of the University of Illinois, felt that universities should be engaged only in scientific study and that anything else was secondary to this goal. Variations of these themes were espoused by Henry Tappan at the University of Michigan, William Folwell at the University of Minnesota, Alexis Lange at the University of California, David Starr Jordan at Stanford, William Mitchell at the University of Georgia, and Edmund James at the University of Illinois.

The first community colleges in the U.S. were, in fact, extensions of high schools. However, the motives of those who actually set up the new junior colleges often did not coincide with those of the proponents from the universities. For them the decision to establish a junior college more often was prompted by a desire to make higher education more accessible to students who could not qualify academically – or financially – for the universities. Also, some saw real advantage in keeping the academic program based near home. Parents could keep a closer watch on youth, who would also be available to work the family farm or business. Local officials, too, could retain some political control; and local businessmen could obtain a more direct and immediate return on tax dollars rather than see their investment benefit some far-off college town.

While the University of Chicago offered the first associate's degree in 1900, Joliet Junior College in Illinois claims the honor of being "America's oldest public community college," having been established as an experimental college preparatory high school extension program for six students in February 1901. Later that same year a junior college was established in Mexico, Missouri, as a sepa-

rate institution; and purists sometimes consider it the "first," because it was not part of a high school program.

The Joliet model – an extension of the high school under the aegis of the local school board – was a rather typical pattern until the 1930s. By the end of 1901, there were eight junior colleges; but their total enrollments numbered less than 100. Twenty years later, junior colleges as extended high schools were found in California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas. Their programs tended to focus on courses that could be transferred to four-year colleges or universities.

At the same time, specialized vocational high schools were being established in Oklahoma, Mississippi, and New York; and these would provide early models for the occupational programs that are part of the curricula of contemporary community colleges. In 1907 California took another first step, passing legislation permitting the creation of separate junior college districts. By 1922 there were 70 public junior colleges, with California having the most. By 1930 nearly half the nation's public junior college students were in California.

The California legislation became a model for many other states. Missouri and Arizona each passed variations of the California legislation in 1927. The 1917 Kansas enabling act was something of a milestone, because it provided for local elections to approve the creation of independent junior colleges as well as special taxing districts to support them.

In 1947 the Commission on Higher Education, established by President Truman, endorsed the concept of college education for the general public, not just for those who could afford the traditional four-year college education. It was the recommendation of the Truman Commission that public community colleges be a vehicle for making this feasible. The Truman Commission is considered by many to be the watershed event, marking the transition from junior colleges and vocational schools to comprehensive community colleges. As a matter of fact, it was the Truman Commission that recommended

"community college" as a more appropriate name than "junior college."

In 1957 a follow-up commission established by President Eisenhower similarly concluded that community colleges were the best way to meet the nation's critical needs for higher education. These sentiments were reiterated in major statements by the National Education Association in 1964, the Carnegie Commission in 1970, and the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges in 1988.

Throughout the 20th century, the number of public two-year colleges has continued to increase, especially during the Depression era and again in the 1960s. In 1970 there were about 850 community junior colleges; by 1980 there were more than 1,000 with a total credit enrollment approaching 4 million. By 1990 the number of colleges was about the same; but enrollments had risen to more than 5 million, with another 4 million in not-for-credit programs. Over the next 10 years this number of institutions will not change significantly, but enrollments are expected to be at least 20% higher.

# Today's Community Colleges

Since Joliet Junior College was established in 1901, community colleges have evolved into comprehensive institutions serving a broad spectrum of the population and offering a wide range of programs. Each institution reflects the educational needs of its local community; and, not surprisingly, community colleges vary significantly even within the same state.

However, most public, comprehensive two-year colleges do have common elements. These are reflected in the generic mission statement developed in July 1984 by the League for Innovation in the Community College:

> The mission of community colleges is to provide to their constituents comprehensive postsecondary programs and services that are academically and financially accessible. To this end community colleges assume leadership in responding to the educational and training needs of their diverse communities and are committed to delivery of high quality instructional and support programs to a broad range of students.
>
> The mission of the community college is manifested through a variety of functions which include but are not limited to:
>
> - Lower division preparation for college university transfer
> - Occupational entry preparation
> - Occupational upgrading and retraining
> - Educational partnerships with business, industry, government, and other institutions

- Education for personal growth
- Counseling, guidance, and other supportive student services
- Programs for special student groups, e.g., handicapped, limited English speaking, gifted, and talented
- Basic Skill development and remediation
- Collaborative programs and services with secondary schools, other colleges, and universities
- General education
- Programs of social/cultural/recreational community enrichment

A community college is an institution accredited to award the Associate in Arts or the Associate in Science as its highest degree. But there are other institutions that now award an A.A. or an A.S., such as private junior colleges, technical institutes, and proprietary schools. However, these institutions do not qualify as community colleges. Some of the characteristics that, when considered together, distinguish community colleges are:

1. They are two-year postsecondary institutions.
2. They provide a comprehensive curriculum.
3. They are locally based.
4. They are integrated into a state master plan.
5. They have flexible admissions policies.
6. They charge relatively low tuition.
7. They provide comprehensive student-support services.
8. They have faculties whose primary responsibility is classroom instruction.

Offering courses that constitute the first two years of a baccalaureate program is only one role, albeit an important one, of a community college. Many persons fail to realize that only a minority of community college students intends to transfer to a four-year institution to get a bachelor's degree. Community college curricula typically include a wide range of occupational programs intended to prepare

students for the work force, but it is not at all unusual to find persons with full-time jobs or persons who already have a bachelor's degree enrolled in order to become eligible for job upgrades or for career changes.

Another major category of programs to be found in a comprehensive community college is continuing education and community service. In the past, such programs were often referred to as "adult education." Today "continuing education" or even "lifelong learning" are frequent designations. Although continuing education programs tend to vary significantly from college to college and even from semester to semester, there are certain common characteristics. One, obviously, is the tremendous variety of subject matter. Another is that they are usually not-for-credit; that is, they are not reported on transcripts in terms of credit hours. Sometimes they take the form of a course, but they frequently are packaged as workshops, seminars, conferences, lectures, forums, exhibits, series, or cultural offerings.

No other segment of American higher education receives such a significant proportion of its revenue from local sources as do community colleges. They typically draw their principal financial support from three sources: local taxes, state funding, and tuition. Most also receive external dollars in the form of grants or gifts from public agencies, private foundations, corporations, or individuals; but such money is usually a small part of their revenue. There is often a state-imposed lid on how much tuition can be charged.

Most community colleges are created and controlled locally. Most have been started by a local referendum conducted after the state passed enabling legislation. In many states, community colleges and local school districts are controlled similarly; and locally elected boards of trustees, rather than a state-wide board of regents, may constitute the final authority.

Community colleges characteristically have a more flexible admissions policy than baccalaureate institutions. While they enroll their

share of "traditional" college students – those right out of high school seeking a degree on a full-time basis – they admit more nontraditional students. For many community colleges, the admission of taxpayers who meet threshold requirements is seen as a right and not a privilege. For example, the board of trustees of an Iowa community college passed a policy statement that reads: "Kirkwood Community College believes that developing capacities consistent with both one's needs and aspirations is every person's right."

This "open-door" admissions policy has been one of the most misunderstood characteristics of community colleges and has led to charges that they are second-rate institutions with low standards. It is more accurate to say that community colleges admit anyone who demonstrates reasonable potential for success in the program to which they seek admission. For those who do not demonstrate this potential, there are often programs to help them acquire it; for example, preparation for the GED, the high school equivalency diploma examination.

Even when a diploma may be a requirement for admission, it will not entitle admission into every program. For some programs, interviews and appropriate test scores may be required to qualify. At Johnson County Community College in Kansas, for instance, there is one set of admission standards for applicants to its nursing program, (which has had 100% of its graduates pass state board examinations at the first testing) and there is quite another set of standards for those applying for other programs. For programs with more applicants than openings, community colleges often give preference to in-district residents.

Some community colleges are tightening their admissions standards. Miami-Dade Community College in Florida was a leader in this area by establishing a new admissions program in the early 1980s. Testing is now a condition for enrollment there, and special support services are available for those who do not qualify immediately. Miami-Dade's lead in setting up more rigorous admission standards

has been followed by other community colleges, and maintaining standards continues to be an important national issue. Required testing and program placement in some form is mandated in Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Texas.

Concerns expressed by some about the adequacy of the first two years spent at the community college as a preparation for transfer to a senior institution have proved to be unwarranted. For example, a recent study of junior and senior students who transferred from Johnson County Community College to Kansas universities showed no significant differences in grade point averages from those who had spent the first two years at the state universities.

Keeping tuition low has been an important factor in the success of the community college. Community college students pay considerably less tuition than they would for comparable programs at four-year colleges or universities. Also, many of the same financial-aid opportunities available at four-year colleges are also provided for community college students, including guaranteed loans, Basic Education Opportunity Grants, college work study, and scholarships based on need or ability. As the costs of education rise with inflation and as four-year colleges are forced to raise their tuition, this difference in tuition levels will become even more significant. Community colleges, which now account for more than 50% of all undergraduate enrollments, will have an even larger market share by the turn of the century.

To make their flexible admissions policies work, community colleges have had to provide strong student-support services in such areas as recruitment and admissions; academic, career, and personal counseling; as well as the more traditional advisement programs. For example, the career center at a community college might provide testing and assessment services for potential students in addition to the more traditional job-placement services; and it would not be unusual for a significant number of their clients to be nonstudents. Community college student-support services also might include study skills and tutoring programs as well as a variety of student activities. In addi-

tion, child-care facilities on campus increasingly are being provided for students who are parents.

Community college counselors and faculty are usually responsible for working with individual students in matching courses to educational plans. Frequently staff are assigned to work closely with those schools to which students most frequently transfer, and sometimes formal articulation agreements with senior institutions are negotiated to guarantee transfer conditions. One of the more sophisticated approaches to this is at Miami-Dade Community College in Florida, where a computerized system has been developed for translating student transcripts into course equivalents at senior institutions throughout the state. Other community colleges, such as Johnson County Community College in Kansas, hold special all-day programs where admissions officers from area senior colleges come to campus to discuss requirements and even to assist students in applying. Since the college-age population has declined and the competition for enrollments has increased, senior institutions increasingly have become willing to recruit community college students.

When considering the heterogeneous nature of their student bodies – a broad range of ages, disparate social and economic backgrounds, different motives for coming to school, a span of abilities, and varying degrees of quality and levels of previous education – it should come as no surprise that by necessity and purpose the primary emphasis for community colleges is on classroom teaching. Faculty are evaluated chiefly on the basis of their classroom performance. A good community college teacher has to have not only intellectual skills but also the ability to inspire the diverse range of students who come to the classroom. Research, publication, prominence in the discipline, or the ability to obtain grant monies are not the basis for promotion and tenure.

Compared to the faculty of a four-year college or university, fewer community college instructors hold doctorates, and more have only master's degrees or vocational certificates. Possibly because so many

community colleges were founded since 1960, their faculty tend to be young and clustered in the 40- to 50-year-old range. Two-thirds of the full-time faculty work under collective bargaining agreements.

In many ways faculty positions at community colleges are the most desirable teaching opportunities in higher education today. Enrollments are strong, and there is less chance of retrenchment and loss of position than at four-year colleges. Tenure practices are similar to those of elementary and high school districts, and often tenure is granted after only two or three years of satisfactory service. Community college salaries are competitive in relation to faculty salaries in other sectors of education.

Dale Parnell, president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, listed these characteristics of community colleges in his 1985 book, *The Neglected Majority*. These are the common elements of a community college philosophy that make these institutions an important option in postsecondary education:

1. Opportunity with excellence (quality and equality).
2. Cost effectiveness (low tuition and low operating costs).
3. A caring environment (good student-support services).
4. A competent faculty (oriented to teaching).
5. A comprehensive curriculum (something for everyone, including the average students who constitute the "neglected majority").

# Student Enrollments for the 1990s

By the year 2000, it is projected there will be about 6 million students in more than 1,200 two-year colleges. There are many reasons behind this phenomenal growth. The most fundamental, of course, is that not only has the population increased, but the proportion of those finishing high school and going on to college also has increased.

There are other reasons for these enrollment increases. State funding, which on the average accounts for about half of a community college's revenue, often is based on formulas tied to enrollments. In addition, community colleges are both affordable and geographically accessible; and their convenience is magnified even more by the use of extension centers and other off-campus sites, such as churches, elementary and high school buildings, public recreational facilities, business establishments, and others. Community colleges have aggressively marketed their programs, especially to segments of the population underserved by more traditional higher education institutions. And finally, changes in the work place requiring different skills have created a greater need for career education.

There are many reasons why students choose community colleges: Following are some vignettes that illustrate the reasons for students' choices.

Last year Mary graduated from a local high school in the upper quarter of her class. Although she is sure she wants to get a bachelor's

degree, she has little idea about what she wants to do when she gets out of college. After talking it over with her high school counselor, Mary decided on the community college. This will permit her to explore options by taking courses in different fields and also to keep the part-time job she has had for three years. When her long-range goals are clearer, she will transfer to a four-year college.

Bob's father and grandfather graduated from Old Ivy University in business administration, and it has always been Bob's ambition to do the same. Unfortunately, the cost of Old Ivy is more than Bob and his family can afford. The local community college set up a program of study for Bob, in cooperation with the Business Department chairperson at Old Ivy, that will permit Bob to spend the first two years at the community college and the last two years at Old Ivy and thereby accomplish his long-held goal.

Dick is 50. He was not interested in school when younger and enlisted in the service right out of high school. He now owns a successful business and has several persons working for him. Over the past several years, he has become very interested in literature and philosophy. He decided to go back to school for an associate of arts degree, because he wants to do it and has the time.

Fred is a 28-year-old widower with two children. He chose to take his courses at the community college, where there was a child-care facility, rather than in the evening division of the local university.

Henry is a physics major at a four-year college and an A student. He is also on the varsity swimming team. He takes elective humanities courses each summer at his local community college so he can concentrate on his major during the regular school year and still participate on the swimming team.

Tim received a bachelor's degree in journalism four years ago. He recently started a new job as a writer in the marketing department of a pharmaceutical company. His employer sent him to the community college for some chemistry courses so he would have a better technical understanding of the product line.

Carol graduated from high school a year ago and enrolled in the community college because it had an excellent dental hygienists' program. She wanted to work in the community, and she felt that she would have a better chance to get a good job if she did her training locally.

Martin started working for his company 10 years ago immediately after finishing high school. He began as a file clerk in the shipping and receiving department. He took courses at the community college in the secretarial careers program. His improved skills enabled him to qualify for an opening as an administrative secretary. Martin continued his course work in the business area. Recently he was promoted to purchasing agent.

John was one of 10 children from a poor family. He dropped out of high school and took a job as an orderly in a hospital. He is married now and the father of a young child. At the community college, he was able to complete his high school education through the GED program. With a scholarship he received through the financial aid office, John is now enrolled in the nursing program. When he graduates after two years, his earning potential as a nurse will be considerably higher than it is as an orderly.

Helen is 47 and wants to return to the labor force after a 25-year absence. She was a secretary before she was married and has now enrolled at the community college in the refresher program for secretarial careers.

Sylvia's husband deserted her and their daughter. Sylvia was frantic because she had no marketable skills and expected no alimony or child support. The counselor at the state office of family services got her into a publicly-funded training program at the community college. Sylvia earned a certificate in hospitality management and is now assistant food-service manager at a local hotel.

Fred is the office manager for the local claims office of an insurance company. He has been concerned about the communications skills of some of the persons in the office. He arranged for the community

college to design and offer a program for his staff in the lunchroom on Thursday afternoons after the office closes.

Marion enjoys handicrafts. This semester she is learning rosemaling, a type of Norwegian folk painting, through the community college. Last year she took floral arranging and, before that, quilting. All her children are in school, and she enjoys the opportunity to get out of the house and make new friends while she is learning some new crafts.

As the above vignettes illustrate, students at community colleges come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of reasons for attending. However, several generalizations can be made about community college enrollments in 1990.

- 70% of the students attend part-time.
- The average age of the students is about 29 years.
- The largest age group of students is about 19 years.
- 53% are women.
- Community college enrollments constitute 37% of all higher education enrollments and 47% of all minority enrollments, including:
  - 43% of all blacks in higher education,
  - 55% of all Hispanics in higher education,
  - 56% of all Native Americans in higher education, and
  - 42% of all Asians in higher education.

While the academic ability of these students ranges from very high to low, the proportion of lower-ability students greater in community colleges than in four-year colleges. And while the very rich as well as the very poor attend community colleges, the socioeconomic status of the student body in community colleges is also a little lower.

Here are some of the student-related issues that will be debated in the 1990s:

Are community colleges truly an avenue of democratization? Or do they segregate and thereby divert certain groups in American society from the egalitarian ideal?

If resources prevent unrestricted enrollment and growth can no longer be sustained, whom should be given first access? Whom should be admitted and whom should be turned away?

How can you ensure both access and academic excellence? How should students be assessed and monitored? And what conditions should be placed on program completion?

# Curriculum and Instruction in the 1990s

The curriculum of a comprehensive community college can be divided into five categories: compensatory education, general education, transfer education, continuing education, and community services. Until recently, community colleges rarely took an integrated approach to the curriculum. Even today, career, transfer, and continuing education often are funded at different levels. Over the past 10 to 15 years, however, there has been considerable emphasis on a more interrelated, across-the-curriculum approach concentrating on such things as writing, critical thinking, values, mathematics, and internationalism/multiculturalism.

The college transfer function has long been the bread and butter for community colleges because transfer students typically take more courses than do career students and thus generate proportionately more credit hours. At the same time, the liberal arts courses transfer students take are less expensive to offer. They often do not require labs with expensive equipment, and you can usually bump up enrollments easier than in a vocational classroom. Although this sector of the curriculum lost ground over the last few decades, more students come to college now with the intent of eventually transferring; and it would appear that this transfer education will see an increase in the 1990s.

Clearly, larger numbers of underprepared students, those with deficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics, will be coming to community colleges. The issue is not whether community colleges will

deal with this clientele, but how. The dilemma is ensuring access without lowering academic standards. Some advocate establishing specific entry and exit competencies for each class and program. Others would grant free access but would restrict the number of courses an underprepared student could take at one time. Still another approach is offering remedial programming outside the credit-hour structure.

Two issues face the not-for-credit programs in community colleges, and both have been around for some time. The first issue concerns funding. Frequently these programs are not funded by the regular revenue sources and must generate enough revenue to be at least somewhat self-supporting. The other issue is the perception that not-for-credit programming is not sufficiently rigorous to be considered college-level work. However, not-for-credit programs are here to stay and will flourish, although they will remain something of a stepchild. It is likely that contracts with business and industry will be an ever-increasing component of these programs.

Other curriculum and instruction issues facing community colleges in the 1990s include:

How can the community college tradition of allowing students almost absolute freedom in defining a personal curriculum be reconciled with a required core curriculum?

How can the transfer programs be strengthened to connect the less-traditional students with a real baccalaureate option?

How can high quality be maintained in continuing education programming? And how can it be funded equitably?

## Staffing in the 1990s

There are about 275,000 instructors in the nation's community colleges, 60% of whom teach part time. This percentage of adjunct or part-time instructors has risen from 40% in the early 1970s. Most part-time instructors have other jobs, as do many of the full-time faculty.

The large percentage of part-time faculty makes it possible to offer specialized courses or programs where enrollments would be too small to justify a full-time teacher. Part-timers who also work full-time in occupational areas also bring a currency to the classroom that is highly desirable. In addition, the employment of so many part-time faculty has become an economic necessity in most community colleges. Adjunct faculty are often paid considerably less than full-time faculty, usually receive no benefits, and do not require as much office space. But part-time staff still must be integrated into the institution and given adequate support to ensure that they are effective.

The typical full-time faculty member is almost 50 years old with at least 10 years of teaching experience. Most community college instructors have a master's degree or the equivalent in their discipline. The percentage of faculty with doctorates, currently about 25%, has been rising; although it still is lower than the percentage of doctorates held by liberal arts faculty in universities. Most faculty are hired without doctorates, and many earn them while working.

There are relatively few university programs specifically designed to prepare persons for community college careers. Indeed, one might

ask whether university faculty really understand what goes on at community colleges. There has been a movement in the last decade to improve staff development at community colleges through such organizations as the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development; but not nearly enough is done at most institutions.

The equivalent of tenure can usually be achieved in no more than three years of successful teaching in the community college. Salary schedules tend to be higher than in elementary and high schools but lower than in a university. This is somewhat misleading, however, because it is usually possible to move up on the community college salary schedule faster; and increased compensation often is available for teaching extra sections or taking on a project. The average workload is equivalent to 15 lecture hours per week, and often there is a requirement for a minimum number of weekly office hours. Class sizes vary, and dropouts usually cause the sections to be smaller at the end of the term than on the first day of classes.

Faculty are not reflective of the gender and ethnic background of the students. Slightly more than half are male. Ninety percent are white; less than 5% are black; and even fewer are Hispanic.

There have been many warnings of a serious shortage of faculty starting in the next decade. It is estimated that 40% of the faculty in community colleges will retire by the year 2000. The number of new teachers needed to replace them, as well as to accommodate the expected enrollment growth of a million more students, presents a monumental staffing challenge. This especially will be true in recruiting minority teachers; it is hard to see that enough can be hired that would in any way be proportional to minority student demographics.

The administrative leadership of colleges also will experience a significant turnover in the next decade as the "founding" deans and presidents retire. The new generation of administrators will have had their entire career formed in community college education and typically will not have transferred from a high school or university setting. As with faculty, qualified minority candidates will be in special demand.

These are some staffing issues that are likely to be crucial for the 1990s:

What characteristics will be needed for success by the new generation of faculty and administrators who will be entering the work force? And how will they be identified, recruited, and retained?

With regard to the existing faculty, how can they be kept current in their fields and enthusiastic about what they are doing? How can the desire for fewer working hours, smaller classes, and better-prepared students be balanced against the reality that more students will be knocking at the "open door"?

How can high quality be sustained when so many sections are taught by part-time faculty? At the same time, how can the percentage of part-time faculty be reduced if enrollments continue to grow faster than resources?

# Financing Community Colleges in the 1990s

Community colleges are big businesses in their communities. Their revenues and expenditures are usually far above those of the average local business, and they employ more people and have larger facilities and grounds. The 1990s will see community colleges being monitored closely by the state and public to ensure that costs are controlled and that money is spent effectively.

The costs of running community colleges have risen faster than the rate of inflation, largely because of enrollment increases. These costs will continue to increase with larger enrollments. But more than that, if the student body of tomorrow contains a higher percentage of underprepared students, then the cost for student-support services will rise at an even higher rate. As enrollments increase, secondary support services like security and custodial services also will rise. And energy costs will remain a big-ticket item.

Because community colleges are labor intensive, the cost for personnel is the largest expenditure category. There will be some savings as retiring staff are replaced with younger, presumably lower-paid employees. But this will be offset by premiums paid to compete in a tight labor market and by the increased costs of providing medical coverage and other employee benefits.

The trend has been to turn increasingly to state funding. Having a large percent of revenues paid from the state is especially attractive for school districts with low assessed property values. But more state

funding has brought with it more state scrutiny. In the 1990s the drive for higher levels of state funding will continue.

Although tuition will increase and, in some places, will be tied to some index of income, low tuition will remain a hallmark of community colleges. Differential tuition may be applied to more factors than residency. For example, higher rates may be charged for prime-time classes, for courses taken as a less-than-full-time student load, or for such high-cost programs as health science.

Here are some finance issues likely to be prominent in the 1990s:

Should state funding be used to pay for all services at a community college or only for some of them?

Should business and industry pay a greater share for those services that clearly are tied to economic development?

Should the community college be paid to perform such services as compensatory education that already are available at the high school level? Why should any state funds go to support not-for-credit education?

How can you control a budget when so many of the costs are fixed and so few are discretionary?

# What Next?

As we approach the year 2000, one thing is certain: Publicly supported community colleges are here to stay. They have learned well the old adage of business, "diversify or die"; and they will continue to adapt successfully to exigencies of funding and local conditions. Here are some specific predictions for the future:

1. The student bodies of tomorrow will be even larger and more heterogeneous than those of today. Enrollments over the next 10 years will increase more in community colleges than in any other sector of U.S. higher education; and the number of students in credit and not-for-credit programs in 2000 will be at least 20% higher than in 1990. The student body will be more diverse, and the mean age will be higher. There will be more minorities, especially Hispanics. There will be more persons over 55 years of age. There will be an even higher percentage of part-time students. Job seekers and workers looking for skills upgrades will continue to crowd through the "open door."

2. The majority of faculty in community colleges in the year 2000 will have been hired after 1990. As many as 40% of current faculties will retire, and others will leave the teaching profession. These will need to be replaced. Another 20% will need to be added just to keep pace with growth. The much-heralded teacher shortage will not be a crisis; but community colleges will need to devote increased resources to recruiting, retaining, and developing qualified staff, especially minorities. The percentage of part-time faculty will remain high, and minorities will continue to be underrepresented.

3. The pressure on community colleges to prove their effectiveness will continue. Emphasis will continue to be placed on assessing student learning, and controversy will focus on the definition of those instructional objectives that constitute the basis for measurement. Debate over funding formulas tied to assessment will exacerbate this controversy.

4. The structure of the community college curriculum will remain basically unchanged. Career education will remain prominent, and business and industry will pressure community colleges to provide two-year technical programs that currently are offered as four-year collegiate programs. There also will be increased emphasis on transfer programs, which increasingly will be the route for minority students toward a baccalaureate degree and the professions. Compensatory programs will be more accepted as a legitimate and necessary function of colleges. Community education will continue to depend on fees, special grants, and cooperative arrangements with industry -- resources outside the stream of revenue that finances the other components of the curriculum.

5. Community colleges increasingly will control their own destinies and will play a more significant role in shaping the future of higher education. Less and less will their academic agendas be dictated from above by transfer institutions or from below by high schools. They will be integrated into the graded system of American education and not outside of it. This will occur partly because staff from community colleges will move into leadership roles in professional associations that have heretofore been dominated by personnel from four-year colleges and universities; and these associations will, in turn, begin to focus on issues that reflect the concerns of their membership. In addition, the professional associations for community college education will exercise influence commensurate with the enrollments community colleges represent in higher education.

6. The relationship between community colleges and four-year colleges and universities will become more nearly one of equals. The

most significant factor bringing about this change will be the relative low cost of community colleges, which will make them an even more attractive alternative. Thus community colleges will enjoy a large market share of "traditional" students, and they will be more financially secure than many four-year colleges and universities. Community colleges will receive an increasing proportion of federal funding as funding agencies become more sensitive to community college issues. And an increasing number of community colleges will sponsor endowment corporations or foundations to go after grants and gifts for special projects from corporate donors and the government.

7. As commuter colleges, the community colleges will be vulnerable to any prolonged crisis in the oil industry. This will be especially true for rural districts with low population density. The 1990s may see more dormitories, off-campus instruction, and the use of television.

Over the next 10 years, community colleges will be confronted by serious challenges; but they will remain the most viable sector of American higher education. However, their continuing success will be contingent on their adaptability to the changing needs of the society they serve. This is the principal reason why they already have flourished, and their flexibility will determine their future success or failure.

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